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More than 20 million adults in the United States are living with diabetes. Each year, about 1.5 million Americans ages 20 and older are diagnosed with diabetes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Indiana has 387,000 people diagnosed with diabetes. One in three children born in 2000 will develop type 2 diabetes at some point in their lives. On average, more than 4,100 people are diagnosed with diabetes every day. On any given day, about 55 people with diabetes go blind, 120 experience kidney failure, and 230 have a limb amputated. Cardiovascular disease kills 2 out of 3 people with diabetes. In 2005, diabetes was the sixth leading cause of death in Indiana; the fourth leading cause of death in residents aged 55 to 64 years; the fifth leading cause of death for those 65 years and older; and the seventh leading cause of death for those 25 to 34 years.

Risk factors for type 2 diabetes include having: a parent, brother, or sister with diabetes; a family background that is African American, Hispanic/Latino American, Asian American, American Indian, or Pacific Islander; diabetes during pregnancy or given birth to at least one baby over 9 pounds; high blood pressure-140/90 or higher; little or no physical activity; or weight above recommendation. If you think you are at risk, find out by talking with your health care provider. You may need to be tested.

However, there is good news related to diabetes. People can take steps to reduce the complications associated with diabetes.

If you have diabetes, Control Your ABCs: People with diabetes need to know how to control their **ABCs** – as measured by the **A1C** test, **B**lood pressure, and **C**holesterol.

A1C (A-one-C) is a test that measures a person's average blood glucose level over the past three months. The recommended target is less than 7 percent and it should be checked at least twice a year. U.S. and international research studies show that for every 1 percent reduction in A1C, the risk of developing eye, kidney, and nerve disease is reduced by 40 percent.

High **blood pressure** makes a person's heart work too hard. The recommended target is below 130/80 and should be checked at each doctor's visit. Blood pressure control can reduce heart disease and stroke by approximately 33 to 50 percent and reduce eye, kidney, and nerve disease by approximately 33 percent. In general, for every 10 millimeters of mercury (mm Hg) reduction in systolic blood pressure, risk of diabetes-related complications is reduced by 12 percent.

Too much bad **cholesterol**, or LDL, builds up and clogs a person's arteries. The recommended level is below 100 mg/dL and should be checked at least once a year. Improved control of cholesterol can reduce heart disease and stroke by 20 to 50 percent.

People with diabetes need to ask their health care team what their ABC numbers are, what they should be, and how to reach their goal numbers.

There are management tools which can help lower your ABCs. If you are overweight (BMI ≥ 25), lose 10-14 lbs; eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains; eat less fatty foods and fewer total calories per day; and get some physical activity every day, like brisk walking, for at least 30 minutes. If you smoke, quit because smoking doubles your risk of cardiovascular disease.

More information can be obtained from the American Diabetes Association, including a risk test, at www.diabetes.org or from the National Diabetes Education Program, www.ndep.nih.gov. You can also contact the Diabetes Prevention and Control Program to find information on local education and support programs in Indiana, www.in.gov/isdh/programs/diabetes/splash.htm or 1-800-433-0746.

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